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GUIDELINES REGARDING THE FORM AND CONTENT OF INITIAL REPORTS OF STATES PARTIES

1. Under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, each State party undertakes to submit a report on the legislative, judicial, administrative or other measures that it has adopted to give effect to the provisions of the Convention and on the progress made in this respect within one year after the entry into force of the Convention for the reporting State, and thereafter at least every four years and further whenever the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women established under the Convention so requests.

2. In order to assist the States parties in fulfilling their obligations under article 18 of the Convention, the Committee recommends that the States parties should follow general guidelines as to the form, content and date of reports. The guidelines are to help ensure that the reports are presented in a uniform manner so that the Committee and the States parties can obtain a complete picture of the implementation of the Convention and the progress made therein.

3. The report should be in two parts. Part I should be prepared in accordance with the consolidated guidelines for the initial part of the reports of States parties to be submitted under the various international human rights instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, as contained in the annex to document HRI/CORE/1.

4. Part II should provide specific information in relation to each provision of the Convention, in particular:

(a) The constitutional, legislative and administrative provisions or other measures in force;

(b) The developments that have taken place and the programmes and institutions that have been established since the entry into force of the Convention;

(c) Any other information on progress made in the fulfilment of each right;

(d) The de facto position as distinct from the de jure position;

(e) Any restrictions or limitations, even of a temporary nature, imposed by law, practice or tradition, or in any other manner on the enjoyment of each right;

(f) The situation of non-governmental organizations and other women's associations and their participation in the elaboration and implementation of plans and programmes of the public authorities.

5. It is recommended that the reports should not be confined to mere lists of legal instruments adopted in the country concerned in recent years but should also include information indicating how these legal instruments are reflected in the actual economic, political and social realities and general conditions existing in the country. As far as possible, States parties should make efforts to provide all data disaggregated by sex in all areas covered by the Convention and the general recommendations of the Committee.

6. States parties are invited to submit copies of the principal legislative, judicial, administrative and other texts referred to in the report so that these can be made available to the Committee. It should be noted, however, that for reasons of expense those texts will not normally be reproduced for general distribution with the report except to the extent that the reporting State specifically so requests. It is desirable, when a text is not actually quoted in or annexed to the report, that the report should contain sufficient information to be understood without reference to that text.

7. The reports should reveal obstacles to the participation of women on an equal basis with men in the political, social, economic and cultural life of their countries, and give information on types and frequencies of cases of non-compliance with the principle of equal rights.

8. In reporting on reservations to the Convention:

(a) Each State party that has entered substantive reservations to the Convention should include information on those reservations in each of its periodic reports;

(b) The State party should indicate why it considered the reservation to be necessary; whether any reservations the State party may or may not have registered on obligations with regard to the same rights set forth in other conventions are consistent with its reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; and the precise effect of the reservation in terms of national law and policy. It should indicate the

plans that it has to limit the effect of reservations and ultimately to withdraw them and, whenever possible, specify a timetable for withdrawing them;

(c) States parties that have entered general reservations which do not refer to a specific article of the Convention or reservations to articles 2 and 3 should make a particular effort to report on the effect and interpretation of those reservations. The Committee considers such reservations to be incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention.

9. The reports and the supplementary documentation should be submitted in one of the working languages of the Committee (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian or Spanish) in as concise a form as possible.